

# IOWA BIRD LIFE

IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION



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*The Iowa Ornithologists' Union, founded in 1923, encourages interest in the identification, study, and protection of birds in Iowa and seeks to unite those who have these interests in common. Iowa Bird Life and IOU News are quarterly publications of the Union.*

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# Meet an Iowa Birder — Pete Wickham

*William Scheible*



*Pete Wickham*

Three hundred sixty-five days. Forty-eight states. To see 100 species of birds in each of them in one calendar year. Seems like a wild and crazy endeavor perhaps, but not to Pete Wickham. An idea that had been percolating in Pete's head for some time, this saga became a reality in 2001, shortly after Pete's retirement. Enlisting the aid of and with encouragement from his wife, Louise, Pete embarked on his unique version of a Big Year.

Most Iowa birders probably know Pete, if not personally, at least by reputation. He has been an active birder in our state for 35 years, since sinking roots in Cedar Rapids as a member of the Coe College faculty. I think of Pete as the "Dean" of Linn County birders, a fitting title given his lengthy career in academia. Virtually everyone who has been in the field with Pete has learned from the experience, about birds, plants, geology, or indeed, about those intangibles such as character and humility.

Peter Wickham was born in New Jersey during the Depression, the eldest of four children. His father, an engineer, was employed in New York City and soon moved the family to the village of Upper Brookville in Nassau County on Long Island. Although a mere 25 miles from The Big Apple, this was not an overcrowded suburb but rather a mix of small houses and Great Gatsby-like estates. A place where "everyone knows your name — a wonderful place to grow up."

Pete spent summers working at his uncle's farm further east on Long Island, a rural area dotted with vacation cottages of city folk. It was in this setting that Pete, in his early teens, began a life-long fascination with the natural world and with birds in particular. With no optics or field guide, Pete and his cousin explored their surroundings and attempted to identify birds. In those days, bird identification meant rushing home to look in Eaton's *Birds of New York State*, a wondrous but weighty two-volume work, published in 1914 and lavishly illustrated by Louis Agassiz Fuertes. Back at home, Pete's only access to optics was his father's primitive hand-held monocular "telescope," which inverted the image (imagine creepers descending trees and nuthatches climbing upward). One of Pete's early recollections of making a "tough," independent identification was crawling on his belly on a snow-covered gravel driveway to observe a flock of upside-down American Tree Sparrows.

Pete was sent by his parents to a college preparatory boarding school near Philadelphia for his final two years of high school. Here, his knowledge and appreciation of birds blossomed. Unusual then, and probably still today, the school had an organized student bird club, led by interested members of the faculty. There were field trips to legendary birding hotspots like Hawk Mountain in Pennsylvania and Bombay Hook in Delaware. And, lo and behold, some people actually had binoculars! For Christmas his

junior year, Pete received a pair of 6x30 binoculars and Peterson's *A Field Guide to the Birds*. He was off and running.

Pete attended Amherst College, one of the "Little Ivies," located in the rolling hills of western Massachusetts. There, Pete was fascinated by winter irruptions and vividly recalls invasions of Boreal Chickadees and Pine and Evening Grosbeaks on campus.

Pete graduated as a chemistry major and moved on to pursue graduate work at MIT near Boston. By now Pete had a means of transportation, a beat-up old Ford, and this allowed him to visit such renowned birding areas as Plum Island and Cape Ann on the coast of Massachusetts. While at MIT, Pete frequently attended Quaker Meeting and it was here that he met Louise Vail, a nursing student in nearby Newton. Between courting Louise and the rigorous academics of MIT, for a couple of years there was little time for his hobby.

Marriage soon followed, and with a Ph.D. in hand, Pete took a job with a pharmaceutical firm in Rensselaer, New York. Finally having weekends free, Pete joined the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club, an active group in upstate New York. Here he began leading field trips and discovered the rewards that come from teaching others about birds and nature. He became the regional editor for New York state bird clubs, a role that opened his eyes to the appeal of record keeping, documentation, and citizen science.

Although Pete was content with his job in industry, there lurked within him an unrealized desire to teach. After five years in New York, résumés resulted in a prompt reply from Coe College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Whoa! To a life-long East Coast dweller, this might as well have been Idaho. But Pete accepted Coe's offer to visit and interview for a position in the Chemistry Department. He was immediately struck by the genuine friendliness of the people at Coe, the comfortable feel of the Cedar Rapids community, and that there were actually trees in Iowa. He was offered a position and signed on.

Pete and Louise moved to Cedar Rapids in the fall of 1969, and thus Pete began a 30-year career at Coe. He loved teaching, he loved his students, but he worked very hard at it, becoming a beloved teacher and mentor at Coe. Pete ultimately assumed the position of chair of the Chemistry Department, which he held for nine years, balancing teaching with administrative duties.

Early in his tenure at Coe, Pete met Gene Goellner, a professor of biology and a serious birder, who in turn introduced Pete to eastern Iowa birding. Pete was amazed by the diversity of bird life in our state, from spring migration to summer residents, to a winter encounter with six Northern Saw-whet Owls in a Linn County woodlot. Pete plunged into the local birding scene, joining Cedar Rapids Audubon and at various times serving as president, board member, field trip coordinator, Christmas Bird Count (CBC) compiler, etc. He continues to be a valued member and has fostered the birding careers of many individuals, including myself. When I moved to Iowa in 1999, I was completely in the dark about Iowa birds and where to find them. Enter Pete. By the end of the year, I had been to Conesville and Donnellson, Chelsea and New Albin, and had visited virtually every Casey's convenience store in eastern Iowa. But more importantly, at Pete's side I learned volumes about Iowa birds.

Pete has also long been a member of the IOU, and has led many field trips at regional meetings, including a now infamous trek into Palisades-Kepler Preserve, where he proceeded to lose half the party in this trackless wilderness. Pete also contributed to *The Iowa Breeding Bird Atlas* and has been a reliable participant/compiler in CBCs every year since moving to Iowa. From countless outings with long-time birding pals Gene Goellner, Fred

Thompson, John Daniel, Jim Fuller, and Ken Lowder, Pete has achieved an Iowa life list of 356 species and his Linn County total of 284 is undoubtedly at the top of this list. Perhaps his most memorable birding experience in the state occurred in 1993, when Pete and Jim Fuller found a Ross's Gull at Red Rock Reservoir, Iowa's first record and one of few in the Lower 48 (Fuller 1994). Gulls have been a particularly noteworthy aspect of Pete's experience in Iowa; he has tallied 19 species in this small, landlocked state.

Pete's hearing is legendary, both in terms of acuity and his recognition of bird song. I've been told that Pete was always the first to hear and the first to identify an unseen bird. Alas, the old auditory apparatus ain't what it used to be, so the waxwings, creepers, and kinglets must now be detected by others. On every other account, though, Pete remains a vibrant member of our clan, his energy leaving far younger folks dazed, huffing, and puffing.

Eastern Iowa birders have Pete to thank for his crucial role in saving Squaw Creek Park, a marvelous spot between Cedar Rapids and Marion. Several years ago, a bond issue was floated that would have funded construction of a dam on Squaw Creek, thereby exchanging wildlife habitat for recreational boating. Due to the efforts of Pete and other concerned citizens, the proposal was defeated. Squaw Creek Park is a very special place to Pete, whose park list exceeds 180 species, testimony to the park's vital role in the ecology of the region. (See Pete's article on the park in this issue.)

And now, the BIG YEAR. This is a mighty big country. This was going to require a whole lot of advance planning. The instantaneous information available on the Internet would clearly facilitate this ambitious odyssey. But Pete thrives on discovery, and, being somewhat of a Luddite anyway, he eschewed this resource and programmed the adventure largely on his own understanding of bird populations and their seasonal variations. To Pete, 'tis far more satisfying to find birds on your own rather than rely on others to locate them for you. Using only the two National Geographic *Guide to Birdwatching Sites*, Pete formulated a complex game plan for 2001. All travel would be via highways, never airways. But, hey, lodging is expensive. So Pete and Louise purchased a camper, allowing them considerable flexibility and, in the long run, economy. This decision was not without its consequences, however, as neither Pete nor Louise had previous experience with this mode of transportation. Hence, there was an early misadventure in Kansas when Pete misjudged the height of an overhang and peeled back the roof of the camper. And the discovered-too-late hole in the floorboard that permitted sand and dust to accumulate to an impressive depth.

But onward. January of 2001 found the Wickhams in Florida. In five days, they had ticked 119 species. This was going to be easy, they thought. But Georgia and the Carolinas proved to be much tougher than anticipated, with counts in the 60s for each of these states. Pete's unbridled optimism was due for a reality check, but the thrill of the chase never lessened. February saw a trip to Texas (152 spp.) and the southern plains states, and in March there came a lengthy drive through California (141 species), Arizona, and New Mexico. This was not a continuous, nonstop, on-the-road venture, however, as there were other obligations to meet. So each month would find the Wickhams briefly in Cedar Rapids or visiting their children in Minneapolis and Kansas City. They visited fabulous birding locales, from well-known venues such as Bentsen-Rio Grande Park in Texas and Ding Darling Preserve in Florida to undiscovered gems like Great Basin National Park in Nevada. In southwest Kansas, arriving in pitch-black darkness and parking the camper along a seldom traveled dirt road, they awoke to find a Lesser Prairie-Chicken lek outside

the window. Upon discovering the nest of a California Gnatcatcher, Pete and Phil Unitt (who was compiling the *San Diego County Bird Atlas*) found themselves staring down the barrel of a shotgun, wielded by a ranch foreman who was none too happy with their avian pursuits. A Eurasian Collared Dove was spotted in Iowa, Louisiana of all places. And perhaps the most surprising bird of the year was a Pomarine Jaeger in South Dakota in November.

As 2001 came to a close, with 40,000 miles on the odometer, the 100 species per state bar had been cleared 36 times. The self-imposed assignment had proven to be more challenging than anticipated, so 2002 began with a concerted effort to complete the task and find those missing birds in the “dirty dozen” states. It took another six months, 20,000 miles, and one kidney stone to do so, but on the morning of 21 June 2002, in Grand Teton National Park, a Fox Sparrow (“slate-colored”) provided species No. 100 for Wyoming. The 18-month Wickham adventure yielded a total of 495 species.

Pete Wickham is a humble man, but I know that I am joined by many in the Iowa birding fraternity in saluting him as a skilled observer, a patient teacher, an engaging companion, and an all-around good fellow. If only he weren't always so hungry!

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## Field Reports — Summer 2005

*James J. Dinsmore*

#### WEATHER

June was generally very warm with rainfall about average. Temperatures averaged 73.4 degrees, 3.6 degrees above average with only five days in mid-June averaging less than normal. It was the 14th warmest June on record and the warmest since 1991. Extremes ranged from 45 degrees at Elkader on 16 June to 99 degrees in Sioux City on 23 June; the latter was the highest Iowa temperature reported since August 2003. Precipitation averaged 5.19 inches, 0.55 inches above average, and the 50th wettest June on record. Rainfall was generally greatest in northern and eastern Iowa and least in the southeast. The heaviest rainfall was late in the month when



*James J. Dinsmore*

Fort Dodge reported 8.15 inches. For the month, greatest rainfall totals were 10.4 inches at Conrad and 9.78 at Fort Dodge.

July was somewhat warmer and dryer than normal. Temperatures averaged 75.3 degrees, 1.5 degrees above normal. The first week was cooler than normal but temperatures were much higher for most of the rest of the month. Iowa's first 100-degree temperatures since August 2003 came on 23–25 July with 104 degrees at Keosauqua on 24 July the highest. It was an unseasonable 45 degrees at Elkader on 27 July. Overall, it was the 44th warmest July on record. The first half of July was drier than normal with an average of 0.36 inches of rain, 2 inches below normal. The second half of July was much wetter. Overall rainfall averaged 3.2 inches, about 1 inch below average. It was the 49th driest July on record. A severe drought prevailed in eastern and southeastern Iowa. The 10.1 inches of precipitation in Davenport in the first seven months of 2005 is the least since records began in 1872 and less than half the long-term average.

## HABITAT, GENERAL TRENDS

It was a fairly average summer with little in the way of weather extremes. The 100-degree plus weather in late July was the first in several years but came after nesting was over for most species. Flooding and violent windstorms were largely lacking so there is little reason to believe that nesting for most species was adversely affected. Probably the most significant weather event affecting nesting occurred in early May when several days of subfreezing weather probably harmed early nesting species like pheasants, turkeys, and waterfowl.

Likewise, habitat conditions seemed similar to recent years. There is still considerable land enrolled in conservation programs like CRP, especially in southern Iowa but recent federal budget concerns threaten the loss of much of that land in the next few years. To date, people interested in game species have been most concerned about those potential losses. However, birders should realize that such habitat losses could have a major effect on populations of both meadowlarks, Bobolinks, Dickcissels, and other grassland birds in Iowa.

## UNUSUAL SPECIES

More Accidental and Casual species were found this summer than usual. Accidental species found were Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, Brown Pelican, and Vermilion Flycatcher. Casual species reported were King Rail, Black-headed Gull, White-winged Dove, and Black-billed Magpie. Other good finds were Bufflehead, Common Merganser, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Red-necked Grebe, White-faced Ibis, and Black-and-white Warbler. Among nesting species, some of the more unusual finds include King Rail and probable nesting by Red-breasted Nuthatch. Among regular nesters, Bald Eagle, Least Tern, and Barn Owl had good years, and Sandhill Cranes seemed to be finding new places to nest. Among several reintroduced species, Trumpeter Swan and Peregrine Falcon had their best years on record while Osprey had a so-so summer.

Thanks to work by several people, especially Shane Patterson, on the IBA program, I received a huge amount of information about forest birds in particular. I received more reports than ever before for Cooper's, Red-shouldered, and Broad-winged hawks including a number confirming nesting. The same was true for woodland songbirds such as Wood Thrush, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Worm-eating Warbler, Ovenbird, Kentucky

Warbler, and Summer Tanager. Likewise it was a great year for Henslow's Sparrows with reports from 20 counties, the most ever. Several June reports of Least Flycatcher, Chestnut-sided Warbler, and Clay-colored Sparrows added to the still confusing summer status of this trio. All are probably rare nesting species in Iowa.

On the other hand, no one mentioned either Brown Creeper or Swainson's Hawk, species that previously had been regularly reported in summer. Likewise, no one mentioned any evidence of nesting for Double-crested Cormorant, Forster's Tern, or Black Tern. A report of a possible Hooded Crow, an Old World species, raises issues of both identification and possible captive origin.

## SPECIES DATA

All CAPS = Casual or Accidental species. \* = documented. County names are in italics. Full names of contributors are at the end of the article. Abbreviations used: **A** = area, **L** = lake, **m.ob.** = many observers, **NA** = nature area, **NWR** = national wildlife refuge, **P** = park, **R** = river, **RA** = recreation area, **Res** = reservoir, **SF** = state forest, **SI** = slough, **SP** = state park, **USNWR** = Union Slough National Wildlife Refuge, **WPA** = waterfowl production area, **WA** = wildlife area.

Key to maps: light shading = species present in county, dark shading = evidence of nesting reported (nest, brood, etc.).

■ Species Present   ■ Species Nesting

**BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK:** One on 22 Jun at Green Bay Bottoms *Lee* (BO-details) and 1 on 26, 29 Jul at Lake Anita *SP Cass* (\*JJD, RIA, PHA, \*DTh) are the fourth and fifth reports this year for Iowa. This species has been showing evidence of range expansion for a number of years.

**Greater White-fronted Goose:** All: 1 on 9 Jun through 30 Jul at Grimes *Polk* (JB, JG) and 1 on 15 Jun in *Kossuth* (MCK).

**Snow Goose:** 1 or 2 were seen in *Adams, Guthrie, Kossuth, Montgomery, Polk,* and *Story*, about typical for summer (m.ob.).

**Mute Swan:** All: 1 on 5 Jun at Dudgeon L *Benton* (CJC) and 1 on 12 Jul at Diamond L *Poweshiek* (SSP).

**Trumpeter Swan:** A total of 23 pairs nested in Iowa this year (RA, PS), a big jump from the 14 nests found in 2004.

**Gadwall:** From 1–3 were found in early Jun in *Cerro Gordo, Hancock,* and *Lucas* (DAK, RLC). Eleven were at Colo Ponds *Story* on 26 Jun (HZ) and 2 were at Pool SI *Allamakee* on 23 Jul (DAK).

**Northern Shoveler:** All: 2 pairs on 1 Jun at Colo Ponds *Story* (HZ), 3 on 15 Jun at Maynard Reece *WPA Kossuth* (MCK), and a brood of 10 on 25 Jun at McBreen M *Dickinson* (LAS).

**Northern Pintail:** All: A male on 4, 25 Jun at Dan Green SI *Clay* (LAS).

**Green-winged Teal:** All: Singles in *Greene, Hancock, Kossuth,* and *Story* (SJD, DAK, MCK, HZ) and 2 in *Polk* (DTh).

**Canvasback:** All: 2 on 1 Jun and 1 on 17 Jul at Eagle L *Hancock* (PH, RGo, DAK), 2 on 22 Jun on the Mississippi R at Montrose *Lee* (SJD), a female on 12 Jul at Credit Island *Scott* (DAK), and 1 on 13 Jul at the MidAmerican Energy Ponds *Pottawattamie* (JLF).



**Redhead:** From 1–7 were found in *Cerro Gordo*, *Hancock*, *Kossuth*, and *Polk* (DAk, RGo, MCK, BE). Two broods were seen 26 Jun at Maynard Reece WPA *Kossuth* (MCK).

**Ring-necked Duck:** All: 3 on 2 Jun near Iowa City *Johnson* (MCD, BSc) and a male on 17 Jul at Terra L *Polk* (BE).

**Lesser Scaup:** From 1–6 were found in *Cerro Gordo*, *Dickinson*, *Hancock*, and *Kossuth* in northern Iowa (DAk, LAS, MCK), about typical for summer. By far the most was 16 on 22 Jun on the Mississippi R at Montrose *Lee* (SJD).

**Bufflehead:** All: A male on 4 Jun at Grover's L *Dickinson* (LAS) and a male on 15 Jun at Port Neal *Woodbury* (BFH).

**Hooded Merganser:** Broods were found at Dunbar Sl *Guthrie* (SJD, JJD), Union Sl NWR *Kossuth* (MCK), Chichaqua WA *Polk* (DTh, DK), Millgrove Access *Poweshiek* (DK), and Cardinal M *Winneshiek* (DK).

**Common Merganser:** All: A male on 15 Jun at Port Neal *Woodbury* (BFH).

**Ruddy Duck:** Evidence of nesting was noted at Spring Run WA *Dickinson* (LAS), Errington M *Polk* (BE), and Colo Ponds *Story* (HZ). From 1–14 were found in *Dickinson*, *Hancock*, *Kossuth*, *Lee*, and *Pottawattamie* (DAk, RGo, MCK, SJD, JLF).

**Gray Partridge:** Besides the usual reports from counties in northern and central Iowa (m.ob.), 1 on 2 Jul at Lost Grove Lake WA *Scott* (DR) and a brood on 16 Jul at Clayton Center *Clayton* (DAk) were both east of its usual range.

**Ruffed Grouse:** Drumming grouse were heard on 11 Jun at Lucas Unit, Stephens SF *Lucas* (KLP, SSP), and 16 Jun at Whitebreast Unit, Stephens SF *Lucas* (SSP). Grouse feathers were found on 10 Jul at Pine Creek WMA *Allamakee* (SSP, KLP).

**Sharp-tailed Grouse:** A few sharp-tailed continue to hold on in *Woodbury*. One brood was seen this summer after only 2 birds were found at the lek this spring (Ed Wiener fide JJD).

**Greater Prairie-Chicken:** Prairie-chicken numbers were down this year and no broods were noted, perhaps because of the relatively cold spring (Ed White fide JJD).

**Northern Bobwhite:** As expected, most reports were from the southern three rows of counties (m.ob.). The northernmost reports were from *Linn* (BSc) in the east and *Harrison* (GLV) in the west. My general impression is that bobwhite made a slight comeback this year.

**Common Loon:** All: 3 on 21 Jun at Spirit L *Dickinson* (ET) and 1 on 30 Jul at North Twin L *Calhoun* (Todd Burras fide JJD). One of the Spirit L birds was in alternate plumage and calling.

**Pied-billed Grebe:** Evidence of nesting was noted in Jun at Cardinal M *Winneshiek* (DeC, brood), Maynard Reece WPA *Kossuth* (MCK, active nest), and Long Pond *Guthrie* (JG, brood).

**Red-necked Grebe:** All: 1–3 from 1 Jun–31 Jul at Eagle L *Hancock* (RGo, PH, DAk) and 2 adults on 4 Jul at Union Sl NWR *Kossuth* (MCK).

**Eared Grebe:** All: 1 on 15 Jun at Maynard Reece WPA *Kossuth* (MCK).

**American White Pelican:** Pelicans seemed to be everywhere this summer with reports received from 14 counties scattered across much of the state (m.ob.). By early July, some reports involved sizeable groups such as 400 on 5 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (NPB) and 350 on 17 Jul at Union Sl NWR *Kossuth* (MCK). The 1,000 on 23 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (JB) was the first really large group, a high count for so early in migration.

**BROWN PELICAN:** All: One at the north end of Spirit L *Dickinson* from 14–18 Jul (and sporadically through 25 Jul in nearby Minnesota, \*ET-photos, \*LAS) and a first-year bird on 30, 31 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (\*SJD, \*JJD, \*BE, m.ob., photos). These are Iowa's first records since 1999 and the first summer records since 1900. Based on plumage and timing of sightings, these may have involved a single bird, which would be Iowa's tenth record.

**Double-crested Cormorant:** From 1–20 were found in *Adair, Guthrie, Hancock, Kossuth, Lee, Lucas, Polk, Scott, Story, Worth, and Wright* (m.ob.). The most was 20 on 2 Jul at Hanlontown M *Worth* (JB). No one mentioned evidence of nesting.

**American Bittern:** All: Singles on 25 Jun at Welch L *Dickinson* (LAS), 8 Jul at Jensen M *Madison* (RTr), and 28 Jul at Harrier M *Boone* (RIA, PHA, DTh).

**Least Bittern:** From 1–6 were found in *Clinton, Greene, Guthrie, Johnson, Linn, Polk, Warren, Winneshiek, Woodbury, and Worth* (m.ob.). Nesting was confirmed on 24 Jun at Cardinal M *Winneshiek* when 3 nests with eggs were found (DK).

**Great Blue Heron:** Small colonies were found in *Fayette, Monona, Polk, and Poweshiek* (DK, GLV). The largest was 15–20 pairs at Geode SP *Henry* (SSP).

**Great Egret:** The usual individuals or small groups were scattered across Iowa. The largest group noted was 28 on 26 Jun at Goose L *Clinton* (BSc).

**Snowy Egret:** All: 1 on 26 Jun at Goose L *Clinton* (BSc).

**Cattle Egret:** All: 2 on 28 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (DTh).

**Green Heron:** From 1–6 were found in 13 counties scattered across the state (m.ob.). This species occurs in small numbers statewide.

**Black-crowned Night-Heron:** One or 2 were found in *Fremont, Hancock, Lucas, Story, Winneshiek, and Worth* (m.ob.). No one mentioned any evidence of nesting.

**Yellow-crowned Night-Heron:** All: An adult on 18 Jun at Colyn A *Lucas* (ABr) and up to 6 there 7–14 Jul (RIA, PHA, m.ob.). A juvenile was seen 16, 30 Jul at Jensen M (RTr).

**White-faced Ibis:** All: 1 on 1 Jun at Maynard Reece WPA *Kossuth* (RGo, PH, DAK-details) and 2 on 14 Jun near Spirit L *Dickinson* (NPB).

**Plegadis species:** All: 2 on 16 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (JG).

**Turkey Vulture:** As evidence of the increasing numbers of vultures in Iowa, an amazing 216 were counted on 29 Jul at a roost near Decorah *Winneshiek* (Katie McVey fide Tex Sordahl). Active nests were found on 12 Jun at Nine Eagles SP *Decatur* (SSP, KLP) and 10 Jul in *Warren* (JG).

**Osprey:** Five territories were occupied this year. Two nests were active at L Macbride *Johnson*; one produced 2 young and the outcome of the other was unknown. Nesting attempts at Hartman Reserve Black Hawk, Don Williams L *Boone*, and Jester P *Polk* all failed (BEh). In late July, a newly constructed nest was found near Cedar Hills Sand Prairie *Black Hawk* (AIB).

**Mississippi Kite:** All: An adult on 4 Jun in Des Moines *Polk* (JG).

**Bald Eagle:** An estimated 190 eagle nests were active in Iowa this year, continuing the growth of recent years. With nests in *Kossuth* and *Story*, 71 counties now have verified nesting records (BEh).

**Northern Harrier:** A nest near Greenfield *Adair* in early Jul contained 4 yg (Kevin Blazek fide BEh), and another nest was reported near Spirit L *Dickinson* in Jun (NPB). Others possibly breeding include a pair on 3 Jun, 1 Jul in *Bremer*

(WV), 2 females on 17 Jun at Medicine Creek WA *Wayne* (ABr), and singles on 4 Jul near Colo Ponds *Story* (JJD), 5 Jul in *Winnebago* (RGo), and 17 Jul near Restoration M *Floyd* (JJD).

**Sharp-shinned Hawk:** All: Singles on 5 Jun near Cardinal M *Howard* (PH-details) and 9 Jul in Des Moines *Polk* (RIC-details) add to the meager summer record for this species.

**Cooper's Hawk:** Birds were found in 21 counties from throughout Iowa. Nests were noted in *Cerro Gordo* (CJF), *Story* (WO), and *Wayne* (ABr). An adult with 2 yg on 30 Jul at Lake Anita SP *Cass* (JJD, SJD) seems to be the first evidence of nesting in SW Iowa in recent years.

**Red-shouldered Hawk:** One or 2 were found in *Allamakee*, *Bremer*, *Butler*, *Delaware*, *Fayette*, *Lee*, *Lucas*, and *Monroe* (m.ob.). The only nest reported, at Yellow River SF *Allamakee*, contained 2 young on 7 Jun (DK); most of the other sites probably also had nesting birds. If so, this represents some expansion from its limited Iowa range in recent years.

**Broad-winged Hawk:** One or 2 were found at 17 different sites in 10 counties, the most found in Iowa in any summer that I am aware of. Specific evidence of nesting came from Nine Eagles SP *Decatur* (active nest, SSP, KLP) and Whitebreast Unit, Stephens SF *Lucas* (adult carrying food, SSP).

**Peregrine Falcon:** Ten territories were active, 7 of which produced 21 young, the most since the reintroduction program began (BEh, PS). Nests that produced young were in *Allamakee* (5 and 2 yg), *Linn* (3 yg), *Louisa* (4 yg), *Polk* (4 yg), *Scott* (1 yg), and *Wapello* (2

yg). Active but unsuccessful territories were in *Des Moines*, *Polk*, and *Scott*. Of most interest was a cliff nest in *Allamakee* that produced 2 yg.

**KING RAIL:** All: A brood of 8 on 2 Jul at Cumming Wetland *Warren* (JG) is the first in Iowa in several years (Gilliam 2005). One was at Errington M *Polk* on 18 Jun (BE).

**Virginia Rail:** Away from its usual nesting sites in northern Iowa, 1 was at Long Pond *Guthrie* on 24 Jul (WO) and a downy chick was found near Iowa City *Johnson* in mid-Jul, the first nesting report from that location (JLF, THK).

**Sora:** All: 1 on 14 Jun near Rock Falls *Cerro Gordo* (RGo) and 1 on 3 Jul at Chichaqua WA *Polk* (DTh).

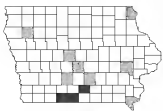
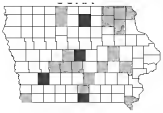
**Common Moorhen:** Evidence of breeding came from Long Pond *Guthrie* (JG, DAK) and Cardinal M *Winneshiek* (DK). Birds found in *Hancock*, *Lucas*, and *Worth* (RGo, TJ, PH) also may have been nesting.

**American Coot:** Nesting was evident on 15 Jun at Maynard Reece WPA *Kossuth* (MCK), and on 18 Jun a brood was at Errington M *Polk* (BE).

**Sandhill Crane:** All: 4 on 2 Jun at Cardinal M *Winneshiek* (DeC), a brood of 2 on 17, 30 Jun near Hogsback WA *Winnebago* (CJF, Robert Schwartz fide JJD), 2 on 26 Jun at Goose L *Clinton* (BSc), 3 on 19 Jul near Iowa City *Johnson* (MHB), 3 on 30 Jul at Sweet M *Bremer* (AlB), and a pair throughout the summer at Wiese Sl *Muscatine* (BO).

**American Golden-Plover:** All: 1 on 9 Jul at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (JJD, SJD) was the first southbound and early.

**Semipalmated Plover:** Last in spring: 1 on 11 Jun at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (JB). Most: 21 on 1 Jun at Polk City WA *Polk* (ABr). First in fall: 1 on 17 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (JG). Most: 12 on 30 Jul at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (SJD).



**Piping Plover:** The 10 on 24 Jun at MidAmerican Energy Ponds *Pottawattamie* included some that were nesting (JG). Reports after that mentioned only 1 or 2 birds and gave no indication of nesting success. At Port Neal *Woodbury*, on 15 Jun there were 2 pairs and 1 juvenile and on 4 Jul two broods were seen (BFH).

**Killdeer:** Very large postbreeding concentrations were found, peaking with 409 on 9 Jul at McCord P *Guthrie* (SJD) and 719 on 30 Jul at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (SJD).

**American Avocet:** A late July cold front apparently brought a wave of avocets into Iowa with 9 at MidAmerican Energy Ponds *Pottawattamie* (JJD), 3 at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD), and 9 at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (DP), all on 27 Jul.

**Greater Yellowlegs:** Last: 1 on 4 Jun at Dugout Sl *Dickinson* (LAS). First: 1 on 12 Jul at Credit Island *Scott* (DAK). One on 21 Jun at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (SJD) was unusually early or summering.

**Lesser Yellowlegs:** Last: 1 on 12 Jun in *Howard* (PH). First: 4 on 26 Jun at Maynard Reece WPA *Kossuth* (MCK). One on 21 Jun at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (SJD) probably summered. This species seemed scarcer than usual this summer.

**Solitary Sandpiper:** Four on 18 Jun at Terra L *Polk* (BE) were either very late or early fall migrants. First: 1 on 1 Jul at South Sycamore Bottoms *Johnson* (MHB). Most: 15 on 18 Jul at Runnells WA *Marion* (ABr).

**Willet:** All: 1 on 4 Jul at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO), 1 on 4 Jul at Cardinal M *Winneshiek* (DeC), 10 on 30 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (BE), and 16 there on 31 Jul (DTh).

**Spotted Sandpiper:** Broods were noted at Fox Forest WA *Poweshiek* (SSP) and Dunbar Sl *Greene* (SSP, KLP).

**Upland Sandpiper:** From 1–5 were found in 13 counties that spanned the state. The only mention of breeding was a brood in *Fremont* (DP).



**Ruddy Turnstone:** All: 1 on 30 Jul at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (SJD, JJD).

**Sanderling:** All: 1 on 28 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (DP).

**Semipalmated Sandpiper:** Last: 1 on 21 Jun at McCord P *Guthrie* (SJD). First: 4 on 12 Jul at Credit Island *Scott* (DAK). Most: 48 on 30 Jul at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (SJD).

**Least Sandpiper:** Last: 12 on 11 Jun at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (JB) [third earliest]. Most: 30 on 1 Jun at Polk City WA *Polk* (ABr). First: 1 on 24 Jun at Cardinal M *Winneshiek* (DK) [ties third earliest]. Most: 182 on 30 Jul at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (SJD).

**White-rumped Sandpiper:** Last: 3 at McCord Pond *Guthrie* and 6 at Dunbar Sl *Greene*, both on 21 Jun (SJD).

**Baird's Sandpiper:** First: 1 on 2 Jul at Big M *Butler* (PH-details) [second earliest]. The next report was 1 on 13 Jul at Horseshoe Bend *Louisa* (DAK).

**Pectoral Sandpiper:** Last: 60 on 11 Jun at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (JB). First: 1 on 9 Jul at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO). Most: 581 on 30 Jul at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (SJD). One on 21 Jun at Dunbar Sl (SJD) probably summered.

**Dunlin:** All: 4 on 1 Jun at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO) and 1 on 1 Jun at Polk City WA *Polk* (ABr).

**Stilt Sandpiper:** First: 1 on 2 Jul at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (DAK). Most: 7 on 18 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (DP).

**Buff-breasted Sandpiper:** All: Singles on 31 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (DP) and Nauman Sod Farms *Johnson* (DP).

**Short-billed Dowitcher:** Last: 1 on 4 Jun at Dugout Sl *Dickinson* (LAS).

First: 1 on 1 Jul at Cardinal M. *Winneshiek* (DeC) [second earliest] and 1 on 4 Jul at Maynard Reece WPA *Kossuth* (MCK). Most: 16 on 18 Jul at Runnells WA *Marion* (ABr).

**American Woodcock:** From 1–3 were found in *Jefferson*, *Johnson*, *Webster*, and *Worth* (DiP, CJC, SSP, PH).

**Wilson's Phalarope:** Two on 4 Jun near Burt *Kossuth* (MCK) and 2 on 20 Jun at Maynard Reece WPA *Kossuth* (MCK) probably were nesting. First in fall: singles on 30 Jul at McCord Pond *Guthrie* and Dunbar SI *Greene* (SJD, JJD).

**Franklin's Gull:** All: 6 on 1 Jun at Iowa L *Emmet* (DAK), 5 on 14 Jun, 1 on 18 Jun, and 3 on 27 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (JG, BE, SJD), and 2 on 16 Jun at Morse L WPA *Wright* (JJD).

**BLACK-HEADED GULL:** One was reported 16 Jul at its usual hangout at the north end of Spirit L *Dickinson* and was seen sporadically there or nearby in Minnesota through the end of July (\*ET, \*PHS).

**Ring-billed Gull:** As is typical, a few were found scattered across Iowa, especially on the larger lakes and rivers. High counts were 28 on 22 Jun on the Mississippi R at Montrose *Lee* (SJD), 26 on 18 Jun at Saylorville Res *Polk* (BE), and 165 on 18 Jul at Red Rock Res *Marion* (ABr).

**Caspian Tern:** From 1–6 were found in *Appanoose*, *Buchanan*, *Johnson*, *Polk*, and *Story* (RLC, TS, DP, JB, BE, SJD, WO), typical of the pattern of this species in summer.

**Common Tern:** All: 4 or 5 on 1 Jun at Crystal L *Hancock* (PH-details, RGo, DAK), 1 on 5 Jun at Port Neal *Woodbury* (BFH), and an adult on 30 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD).

**Forster's Tern:** From 1–8 were found in *Black Hawk*, *Greene*, *Hancock*, *Jasper*, *Johnson*, *Story*, and *Woodbury* (m.ob.). The most reported was 18 on 18

Jun at Spirit L *Dickinson* (ET). No one mentioned any evidence of nesting and presumably all birds were migrants or nonbreeders.

**Least Tern:** It was a great year at the MidAmerican Energy Ponds near Council Bluffs *Pottawattamie* with 40 adults and at least 18 of them on nests on 24 Jun (JG), the most reported there since this colony started in 1984. At Port Neal *Woodbury* 3 adults were seen on 15 Jun (BFH).

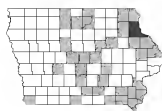
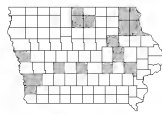
**Black Tern:** There were the usual late migrants in the first half of June with 10 on 15 Jun at Port Neal *Woodbury* (BFH) the most. In July scattered migrants were noted with 25 on 17 Jul at Eagle L *Hancock* the most (PH). No one mentioned evidence of nesting.

**Eurasian Collared-Dove:** Birds were found in *Boone*, *Cerro Gordo*, *Fremont*, *Guthrie*, *Marion*, *Marshall*, *Warren*, and *Wayne* (m.ob.). One on 1 Jul at Ballyclough *Dubuque* (SSP) seemed to be a new site for the species in Iowa.

**WHITE-WINGED DOVE:** Singles on 4 Jul in Kingsley *Plymouth* (\*Loren Hansen-photo) and 29–31 Jul in Graettinger *Palo Alto* (\*Richard and Lois Weber) add to the growing presence of this species in Iowa.

**Black-billed Cuckoo:** One to 5 were found in 16 counties (m.ob.). None were reported from south-central, southeastern, or northwestern Iowa. The most was 5 on 16 Jun at Coon Creek WA *Winneshiek* (DK).

**Yellow-billed Cuckoo:** A few were reported from 34 counties from all except northwestern Iowa (m.ob.). The most was 10 on 7 Jun at Yellow River SF *Allamakee* (DK) and 4 Jul at Backbone SP *Delaware* (SSP).



**Barn Owl:** Four nests were reported this season: One with 5 yg in mid-Jun in *Tama* (BEh), one with 4 yg in early July near Chariton *Lucas* (Beth Brown fide BEh), one with 3 yg in mid-Jul near Anamosa *Jones* (Cheryl Cudworth fide BEh), and one with 7 yg in late July near Greenfield *Adair* (Kevin Blazek fide BEh). This is the best year for Barn Owls in Iowa since 2003.

**Chuck-will's-widow:** One or 2 were heard at the usual site near Waubonsie SP *Fremont* (BSc, JG, DP).

**Whip-poor-will:** Up to 5 were found in *Fremont*, *Madison*, and *Van Buren* (JG, DP, DTh, SSP).

**Ruby-throated Hummingbird:** Reported from 18 counties, mostly in eastern Iowa (m.ob.). The most was 14 on 5 Jun at Pikes Peak SP *Clayton* (DAk).

**Red-headed Woodpecker:** From 1–8 were reported from 16 counties, most in the eastern half of the state (m.ob.).

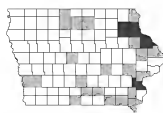
**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** A few were found in *Allamakee*, *Clayton*, *Hancock*, *Kossuth*, *Lyon*, *Sioux*, and *Winneshiek* (m.ob.), all in the northern two rows of counties. Breeding reports included at least 3 broods at Effigy Mounds NM *Allamakee* (DK) and 1 at Pikes Peak SP *Clayton* (SSP).

**Pileated Woodpecker:** Reported from 19 counties (m.ob.), all east of Interstate 35 except for birds at Wanata SP *Clay* (LAS) and Pilot Knob SP *Hancock* (PH). An active nest was found at Nine Eagles SP *Decatur* (SSP, KLP).

**Olive-sided Flycatcher:** All: Singles on 1 Jun at Thorpe P *Winnebago* (DAk), 4 Jun at Croton Unit, Shimek SF *Lee* (MHB), and 4 Jun at Coralville Res *Johnson* (CJC).

**Yellow-bellied Flycatcher:** Last: 1 on 5 Jun in *Cerro Gordo* (PH).

**Acadian Flycatcher:** Reported from 24 counties (m.ob.), most of which are east of Interstate 35. By far the most reported was 25 on 15–16 Jul at Yellow River SF *Allamakee* (SSP). Evidence of nesting was noted for *Clayton*, *Dubuque*, *Fayette*, and *Louisa* (SSP, KLP).



**Alder Flycatcher:** Singles on 1 Jun at Grammer Grove WA *Marshall* (MPr), Thorpe P *Winnebago* (PH), and Myre SI *Winnebago* (DAk) were typical late migrants.

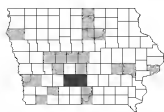
**Willow Flycatcher:** From 1–10 were found in 15 counties covering most of the eastern half of Iowa (m.ob.).

**Least Flycatcher:** The summer status of this species in Iowa remains confusing. One or two were found 1–5 Jun in *Butler*, *Clayton*, *Webster*, *Kossuth*, and *Worth* (DAk, SSP, MCK, RGo). In each of the first three counties, observers thought that at least one bird was acting territorial. Singles on 15 Jun at Big Sioux WA *Sioux* (RIA, PHA), 19 Jun at Sawmill Hollow *Harrison* (BKP, LJP), 2 Jul at Big M *Butler* (PH), 11 Jul at Sweet M *Bremer* (AlB), and 27 Jul at Elk Creek M *Worth* (RGo) may all have been nesting birds.

**VERMILION FLYCATCHER:** The male found in May near Coon Rapids *Guthrie* remained there through the end of the season (\*JB, \*DAk, m.ob.).

**Western Kingbird:** Besides western Iowa where it is expected, several strayed east. In *Polk*, they nested at the state capitol (JG, ABr) and Saylorville Res (Scott Rolfes fide SJD) and singles were seen in West Des Moines (RLC, PHA, RIA). One on 1 Jun at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO) was probably a late migrant as was one far east at Long Grove *Scott* on the same date (SFl). Two or 3 on 28 Jul near Cooper *Greene* (RIA, PHA, DTh) were east of its usual range.

**Loggerhead Shrike:** From 1–4 were



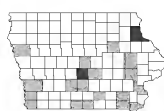
found in 21 counties mainly in western Iowa (m.ob). Broods were

noted in *Madison* (JG) and

*Warren* (RTr).

**White-eyed Vireo:** One or 2 were found in *Black Hawk*, *Jefferson*, *Johnson*, *Lee*, *Lucas*, *Muscatine*, *Polk*, and *Warren* (m.ob.). This is more than are reported most years.

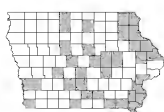
**Bell's Vireo:** From 1–20 were found



in 20 counties in all except north-central and northwestern Iowa (m.ob.). Broods were

found in *Clayton* (DAK) and *Polk* (DTh). This species remains an uncommon and local species across much of Iowa.

**Yellow-throated Vireo:** Up to 13



were reported from 33 counties, mostly in the eastern half of the state (m.ob.). Reports from

*Kossuth* (MCK) and *Pottawattamie* (MOR) were the furthest northwest and west. This species seems to be reasonably common in suitable habitat, especially in eastern Iowa.

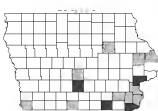
**BLACK-BILLED MAGPIE:** All: Two nests at Broken Kettle Grasslands *Plymouth* probably were successful (Scott Moats fide JJD); magpies have nested there for several years. One was seen there 14 Jun (PHA, RIA).

**Purple Martin:** This species probably occurs in every Iowa county although I believe that numbers are reduced from a few decades ago. It would be interesting to see if some systematic sampling would confirm that prediction. The largest colony reported was 75 birds near *Drakesville* *Davis* (SSP).

**Red-breasted Nuthatch:** One or 2 that had used a Sioux City feeder since Nov 2004 were joined by a third bird on 11 Jun. One of the birds fed another, suggesting there was a successful nest nearby.

The birds were last seen on 11 Jul (JLV). This is apparently Iowa's third nesting record (Schirck 2005 [second nesting record]).

**Carolina Wren:** Reported from 13 counties east of Interstate 35 and north to



*Jackson* and *Black Hawk* (m.ob.). The only report from west of that was 1 on 10 Jul at *Forney* *L Fremont*

(WO). Broods were noted in *Davis* (JJD), *Lee* (SSP), *Muscatine* (SSP, DAK), and *Warren* (JG, AJ).

**Bewick's Wren:** Two on 2 Jun (JLF) and 1 on 15 Jul (MPR) as usual were at the junkyard near *Argyle* *Lee*.

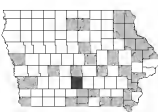
**Sedge Wren:** Most reports were from northern Iowa and showed the typical pattern — active in early June, silent for the rest of June and much of July, and then active again in late July (m.ob.). The southernmost reports were from *Jefferson* (DiP) and *Audubon* (LJP, BKP).

**Marsh Wren:** Generally underreported, observers noted this species as far south as *Guthrie* and *Johnson* (JG, CJC).

**Veery:** From 1–5 were found in *Allamakee*, *Clayton*, *Dubuque*, *Hancock*, *Lucas*, *Marshall*, *Warren*, and *Webster* (m.ob.). By far the most reported was 16 on 4 Jul at *Backbone* SP *Delaware* (KLP, SSP). Evidence of nesting was noted at *Yellow River* SF *Allamakee* (SSP), *Bixby* SP *Clayton* (SSP), *Backbone* SP *Delaware* (SSP, KLP), and *White Pine Hollow* *Dubuque* (SSP, KLP).

**Swainson's Thrush:** All: Singles on 1 Jun at *Mallard* M *Cerro Gordo* (PH, DAK) and 2 Jun at *Smith* WA *Kossuth* (MCK).

**Wood Thrush:** Reported from 31 counties, all within its expected range (m.ob.). The only reports from western Iowa were from *Fremont*, *Monona*, and *Pottawattamie* (JG, MPR, GLV, MOR). The only evidence of nesting was in *Warren* (SSP).



**Northern Mockingbird:** Reports from *Appanoose*, *Decatur*, *Fremont*, *Iowa*, *Louisa*, *Lucas*, *Madison*, and *Wayne* (TJ, SSP, WO, DP, JG, DTh, ABr) were all within its usual range. A nest near Cherokee (DBi) was far from where this species is expected in summer in Iowa, and singles on 2 Jun in *Plymouth* (BFH) and 23 Jul in *Boone* (WO) were on the fringes of its usual range.

**Blue-winged Warbler:** From 1–7 were found in *Allamakee*, *Boone*, *Clayton*, *Hardin*, *Lucas*, and *Winneshiek* (DK, SSP, MPr, DAK, KLP, DeC). As expected, most reports came from northeastern Iowa.

**Tennessee Warbler:** All: 1 on 1 Jun at *Algona Kossuth* (MCK).

**Northern Parula:** Found in 23 counties, mostly in eastern Iowa (m.ob.) but west to *Harrison* (LJP, BKP) and *Fremont* (MPr, LJP, BKP).

A brood was found at *Nine Eagles SP Decatur* (SSP, KLP).

**Chestnut-sided Warbler:** More reports than most years with most seemingly territorial males. Reports included 1 or 2 on 1, 23 Jun, 2 Jul at *Pilot Knob SP Hancock* (PH, RGo, JB), 3 males on 7 Jun at *Yellow River SF Allamakee* (DK), 1 on 8 Jun near *Highlandville Winneshiek* (DK), 1 male on 16 Jun at *Whitebreast Unit*, *Stephens SF Lucas* (SSP), and 2 males and a female on 16 Jun at *Coon Creek WA Winneshiek* (DK).

**Magnolia Warbler:** Last: 1 on 1 Jun at *Thorpe P Winnebago* (DAK, RGo, PH).

**Yellow-throated Warbler:** From 1–3 were found in 11 counties, mostly in eastern Iowa north to *Delaware* and *Dubuque* and west to *Boone* (m.ob.).

**Cerulean Warbler:** From 1–6 were found in 17 counties, mostly in eastern Iowa (m.ob.) but as far west as

*Guthrie* and *Webster* (SSP, SJD). At least 13 were present at *Effigy Mounds NM Clayton* (DAK).

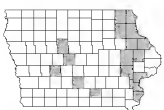
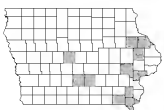
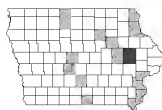
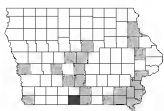
**Black-and-white Warbler:** All: A male on 9 Jun at *Lucas Unit*, *Stephens SF Lucas* (SSP) and 1 on 19 Jun in *Jefferson* (DiP) were singing and appeared territorial.

**American Redstart:** Reported from 22 counties in eastern and central Iowa (m.ob.), it apparently was one of the most abundant woodland species as evidenced by 41 on 2 Jun at *Brushy Creek RA Webster* (SSP), 51 on 21 Jun at *Springbrook SP Guthrie* (SSP), and 46 on 4 Jul at *Backbone SP Delaware* (SSP).

**Prothonotary Warbler:** Reported from 15 counties, most near the *Mississippi R* or major tributaries including the *Cedar* and *Des Moines* rivers (m.ob.). One on 26 Jun near *Algona Kossuth* (MCK) was the most isolated occurrence. A brood was found at *Wickiup NA Linn* (DP).

**Worm-eating Warbler:** As usual, *Lee* was the hotspot for this rare species with reports from both *Croton* and *Lick Creek* units of *Shimek SF* (JLF, MHB, MPr, SSP). Away from there, singles were found on 4 Jun at *Woodland Mounds Warren* (SSP), 12 Jun at *Nine Eagles SP Decatur* (SSP, KLP), and 18 Jul at *Hitchcock NA Pottawattamie* (MOR). Adults were seen feeding what appeared to be a young cowbird on 18 Jun at *Croton Unit*, *Shimek SF Lee* (MHB).

**Ovenbird:** Reports came from 23 counties (m.ob.); only reports from *Boone*, *Clay*, *Decatur*, *Hancock*, and *Kossuth* were west of *Interstate 35* (MPr, SSP, LAS, RGo, MCK). A nest was found at *Sand Creek WA Decatur* (SSP).



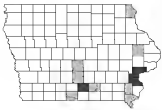


**Northern Waterthrush:** Last: 1 on 1 Jun in *Cerro Gordo* (RGo, DAK) (ties second latest).

**Louisiana Waterthrush:** From 1–6 were found in 17 counties (m.ob.); only the usual birds at Ledges SP *Boone* (MPr) were west of Interstate 35. Reports of nesting included 2 broods at Brush Creek Canyon *Fayette* (DK) and 1 at Yellow River SF *Allamakee* (SSP).



**Kentucky Warbler:** From 1–6 were found in 11 counties, all east of Interstate 35 (m.ob.). Evidence of nesting included a female with 2 yg at Cairo Woods *Louisa* (SSP), a female carrying food at Whitebreast Unit, Lucas SF *Lucas* (SSP), and an active nest at Cedar Bluffs RA *Muscataine* (MCD).



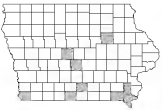
**Mourning Warbler:** Last: 1 on 2 Jun at Smith WA *Kossuth* (MCK).

**Hooded Warbler:** All: 3 on 3 Jun at Lake Ahquabi SP *Warren* (SSP), 1 on 23 Jun at Fish Farm Mounds *Allamakee* (DK), and 1–3 on 2, 15, 18 Jul at Donnellson Unit, Shimek SF *Lee* (CRE, MPr, SSP).

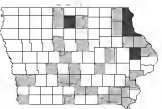
**Yellow-breasted Chat:** From 1–3 were found in 12 counties, mostly east of Interstate 35 and south of Interstate 80 (m.ob.).



**Summer Tanager:** From 1–5 were found in *Decatur*, *Fremont*, *Henry*, *Lee*, *Lucas*, *Polk*, and *Van Buren* where it is expected (m.ob.). One in June and July at Hartman Reserve *Black Hawk* (TS) and 1 on 10 Jun at Ledges SP *Boone* (WO) were both at the fringes of its normal range.

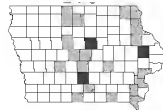


**Scarlet Tanager:** A few were found in 32 counties throughout Iowa indicating that reasonable numbers occur wherever large forests are



found (m.ob.). Patterson's high count was 18 on 15–16 Jul at Yellow River SF *Allamakee* (SSP). Broods or adults attending broods were noted in *Allamakee* (SSP), *Clayton* (SSP), *Hancock* (JB), and *Jones* (SSP).

**Eastern Towhee:** From 1–12 were found in 22 counties, mostly in the eastern half of Iowa (m.ob.). No one reported the species from western Iowa where it is common. The most was 18 on 15–16 Jul at Yellow River SF *Allamakee* (SSP). Evidence of nesting included an active nest at Woodland Mounds *Warren* (SSP) and females carrying food in *Hardin* and *Jones* (SSP).



**Clay-colored Sparrow:** All: Singles on 1 Jun at Crystal L *Hancock* (RGo, PH, DAK), 25 Jun and 16 Jul at Welch L *WPA Dickinson* (LAS), and 10 Jul in Bluffton Twp *Winneshiek* (SSP, KLP). All were singing males.

**Lark Sparrow:** As is typical, a few were found in 12 counties scattered across Iowa. A nest with eggs at Runnells WA *Polk* (DK) was the only evidence of nesting reported.

**Grasshopper Sparrow:** Reported from 14 counties that covered much of Iowa (m.ob.). This species continues to be reasonably common in suitable habitat.

**Henslow's Sparrow:** With reports of as many as 11 birds from 20 counties (m.ob.), this species has shown a dramatic comeback from just a few years ago when few observers were finding it.



**Northern Cardinal:** An active nest north of Ocheydan *Osceola* (Richard Bremer fide DH) seems to be a first for this northwestern Iowa county.

**Blue Grosbeak:** Besides the usual birds near Iowa's western border, a stray was found 5 Jun at Fort Dodge *Webster* (TJ). In eastern Iowa, 1 on 2 Jun near Argyle *Lee* (CRE) and 1 on 17 Jul at Heron Bend A *Lee* (SSP) may have been of the eastern subspecies.

**Dickcissel:** Although few commented, Dickcissels seemed to be abundant throughout Iowa this summer (m.ob.).

**Bobolink:** Opinions were mixed but most observers considered Bobolinks fairly common this summer.

**Western Meadowlark:** One singing on 6 Jul near Arlington *Clayton* (SSP) was east of where this species normally is found. In parts of northwestern *Scott*, where their ranges overlap, Westerns outnumbered the more expected Eastern Meadowlark (WMZ).

**Yellow-headed Blackbird:** One on 2 Jun near Iowa City *Johnson* (BSc) and a colony at Hamlin Garland M *Mitchell* in mid-Jul (JJD) were somewhat out-of-range.

**Great-tailed Grackle:** All: 4 on 6 Jun at Otter Creek M *Tama* (MPr), 13 on 11 Jun at Coulter M *Franklin* (ABr), and 2 on 30 Jul at Jensen M *Madison* (RTr). Either this species was underreported or it has disappeared from some of its traditional nesting sites.

**Brown-headed Cowbird:** Cowbird brood parasitism was noted for the following species: Yellow-throated Vireo at Mossy Glen Preserve *Clayton* (SSP), Red-eyed Vireo at Effigy Mounds NM *Allamakee* (SSP) and Wildcat Den SP *Muscatine* (SSP), Ovenbird at Joy Springs Camp *Clayton* (SSP) and Thousand Acre Unit, Stephens SF *Monroe* (KLP, SSP), Scarlet Tanager at Pictured Rocks P *Jones* (SSP), Northern Cardinal at Woodland Mounds *Warren* (SSP), and Indigo Bunting at Pictured Rocks P *Jones* (SSP).

**Orchard Oriole:** Reported from 16 counties from throughout Iowa (m.ob.). Broods were found at Cardinal M *Winneshiek* (DeC) and in *Jefferson* (DiP).



**Pine Siskin:** All: 1 on 23 Jun in Fairmont Cemetery *Scott* (WMZ) and 1 on 2 Jul at Garnavillo *Clayton* (DAK).

**Eurasian Tree Sparrow:** All: 1 on 27 Jun at Blackhawk Bottoms WMA *Des Moines* (SSP) and 12 on 15 Jul at Montrose *Lee* (MPr). Both sites are close to the Mississippi R.

## COMMENT

I received about 1,900 reports from about 60 people this summer, both records for the summer season. Most of the reports this year were submitted on the web site. This saves me considerable time for which I am grateful. More importantly, when you submit the data, you eliminate the possibility of errors occurring if I were to enter the data into the database. However you provided information, I can only pass on my thanks for your efforts. Without all of you, this report would not be possible.

## CONTRIBUTORS

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Dick Bierman	DBi	Cherokee	Bill O hde	BO	Columbus Junction
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Tom Johnson	TJ	Mystic	Walt M. Zuurdeeg	W MZ	Davenport
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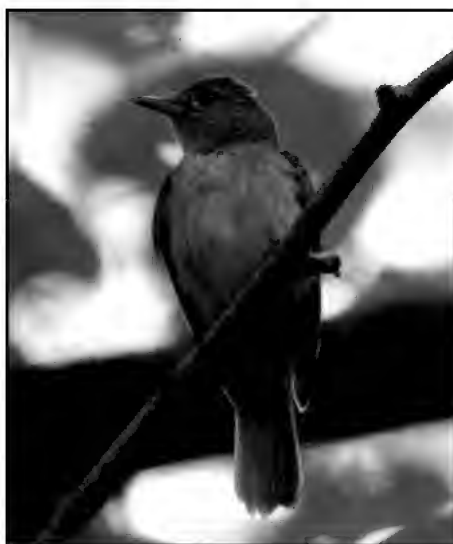
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*Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, one of nine seen near the Chariton River in the Colyn area, Lucas, 8 July 2005. Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.*



*Turkey Vulture, one of two inside a cavity nest in Warren, 10 July 2005. Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.*



*Acadian Flycatcher, Woodland Mounds Preserve, Warren, 2 July 2005. Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.*



*Carolina Wren. This bird nested on my brother's front porch! Rural Norwalk, Warren, 19 June 2005. Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.*



*Boblink, Waterman Area, O'Brien, 26 June 2004. Photograph by Reid Allen, West Des Moines, IA.*



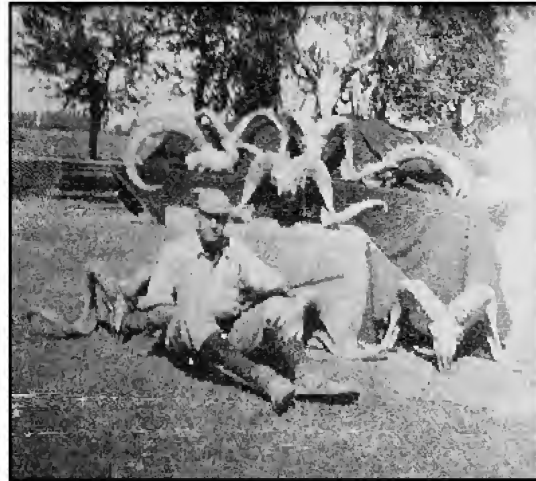
*Summer Tanager, Waubonsie State Park, Fremont, 25 June 2005. Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.*

# William Lewis Abbott, Early Bird Collector on the Iowa Prairie

Matthew C. Kenne

Before the Audubon movement of the early 1900s, the collecting of bird specimens was a passion for many American men (and rarely, women). It was also practiced around the world by individuals with widely differing backgrounds for equally diverse reasons: missionaries and clergy, doctors and army officers, businessmen and consuls in far-flung places, explorers, artists, taxidermists supplying the trade in natural history décor, and professional adventurers paid by wealthy collectors and museums (Mearns and Mearns 1998). Today, these collections are protected in museums as references for research and as an historical record of the ornithological past. One wide-ranging adventurer, William Abbott, began his intriguing career as a collector with three expeditions to Iowa during the years 1879–1881. The Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia houses one of the premier bird collections in the world, with about 360 individual specimens comprising about 120 species attributable to William Abbott's collecting in Iowa.

William Louis Abbott was born on 23 February 1860, in Philadelphia, where he tramped the surrounding countryside as a boy, learning the local fauna. Like many young men of his age at that time, his interest in nature extended to collecting birds while he attended the University of Pennsylvania, as evidenced by Abbott's specimens in the Academy from the Philadelphia area and nearby New Jersey. When not studying or birding, Abbott listened to tales of birds from the West at John Krider's gunsmithing and taxidermy shop, Sportmen's Depot, "an ancient landmark of local ornithology" (Trotter 1915). Mr. Krider had passed through Iowa on a collecting trip in 1871 and published remembrances of his exploits in 1879. He obtained several interesting bird specimens in Iowa, among them Smith's Longspurs (*Calcarius pictus*) now residing in both the Academy and in the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, and an unknown pale subspecies of Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*) from Winnebago County that was later named Krider's Hawk in his honor (Hoopes 1873).



*Figure 1. William Abbott traveled to Kashmir gathering zoological specimens. He stated in a letter dated 1 November 1891 that is housed in the Smithsonian Institution Archives that he wanted to visit Pamir because "it is inhabited by Ovis poli of 'Marco Polo' sheep" and they have "immense" horns. The photograph is dated c. 1891.*

*Permission to reproduce this image was granted by the Smithsonian Institution Archives (Record Unit 7117, Box 4, Image No. 2005-25644).*

William Abbott was an inexperienced traveler in 1879, but he desired birding adventures farther afield. With northern prairies sparsely settled but accessible by rail, and with encouragement from John Krider, Abbott decided to mount a summer bird collecting expedition to the Dakota Territory and Iowa. Accompanied by Krider's taxidermist son, Joseph, the first destination for two weeks in early July was around Pembina in the very northeast corner what is now North Dakota. The path of the Abbott/Krider party during that summer can be followed through the specimen record of the Academy. A few problems with using surviving specimen tags to plot Abbott's activities must be acknowledged: some of his birds are labeled with only the month instead of dates, and some Iowa birds have dates fitting Abbott's travels but do not list the collector's name. Specimens need preparation quickly, but it is possible some confusion was caused by labeling well after the fact, and errors in database transcription can also occur.

Following this first quick taste of fieldwork and bird life far from home, Abbott and Krider headed for northern Iowa. They arrived by at least 24 July, when Abbott collected two Lark Sparrows (*Chondestes grammacus*) and a Blue Jay (*Cyanocitta cristata*). He stated that Blue Jays in northern Iowa were "quite as tame as the European sparrows in our streets" back in the East. The actual county locations of Abbott's Iowa specimens are rarely given, but the few that are suggest that the men remained until September in north-central Iowa where directions from John Krider would have been most useful. Lake Mills and Benson's Grove (now Leland) in Winnebago County are listed as locations for a few specimens; both of these settlements were on a rail line affording quick and easy travel at that time. Abbott collected three Whooping Cranes (*Grus americana*) in Winnebago County, including a juvenile, the last known nesting near the headwaters of the Winnebago River (Kent and Dinsmore 1996). Specimens of Wood Thrush (*Hylocichla mustelina*) and Solitary Sandpiper (*Tringa solitaria*) obtained in early August are from Mitchell, the only other county known from this trip. Throughout his stay, Abbott found most of the expected summer birds in northern Iowa, including Krider's Hawk, of which he wrote "during the latter part of August, we found this hawk quite abundant in Northern Iowa, where we took several specimens." One of the last birds taken by Abbott before heading back to Philadelphia was a Passenger Pigeon (*Ectopistes migratorius*) on 7 September.

The aforementioned quotes are from "List of birds taken at Pembina, Dakota, July, 1879," a slightly annotated list William Abbott wrote for *Forest and Stream* (Abbott 1880). Curiously, although many scientific papers authored by others would describe Abbott's specimens over time, this list is the only information Abbott himself ever published about his travels. His obituary that would appear years later in *The Auk* stated it this way: "His modesty and aversion to indoor work caused him to refrain from publishing any of the results of his explorations although his wealth of knowledge abundantly fitted him for such an undertaking" (Anon. 1936). Because of this, I have relied on conjecture for details such as Abbott's means of travel in Iowa.

Abbott came back to experience Iowa winter after Christmas; there are specimen dates from 28 December 1879 to 4 February 1880, but most specimen labels just state 1880. A Great Horned Owl (*Bubo virginianus*) of the pale Arctic race collected in Mitchell County is the only indication of his whereabouts on this trip, although Abbott probably returned to other areas he was familiar with as well. Fewer birds were collected on this visit than in the summer, but these included Barred Owl (*Strix varia*), Short-eared Owl (*Asio flammeus*), Lapland Longspurs (*Calcarius lapponicus*), Snow Buntings (*Plectrophenax nivalis*), Dark-eyed Junco (*Junco hyemalis*), and Northern Bobwhite

(*Colinus virginianus*). Eight Bohemian Waxwings (*Bombycilla garrulous*) gathered on this trip indicate either an invasion winter or that the species occurred more commonly in Iowa at that time.

By the summer of 1881, William Abbott was ready for another adventure. He arrived in Iowa from Philadelphia in the last days of May, and spent June and the first three weeks of July taking specimens in northern Iowa. Clay, Palo Alto, and "O" counties (O'Brien and/or Osceola) locate some of a wide sample of nesting birds ranging from Henslow's Sparrows (*Ammodramus henslowii*) to Black Terns (*Chlidonias niger*) to Marbled Godwits (*Limosa fedoa*). Toward the end of July, Abbott boarded a train for Huron, Dakota Territory to hunt more birds. According to specimen records, it is likely he continued to Pierre and found passage on a short boat trip up the Missouri River in early August. Abbott returned through northern Iowa to spend the third week of August in Winnebago County, where he found migrants like Black-throated Green Warblers (*Dendroica virens*) and Olive-sided Flycatchers (*Contopus borealis*) heading south, as well as King Rails (*Rallus elegans*) near Lake Mills.

William Abbott received his degree from the University of Pennsylvania in 1881 and began working on a medical degree, which he completed in 1884. He traveled to Cuba and the Dominican Republic during a school break in 1883 to experience tropical bird life and deposited the specimens he collected in the Academy. Abbott then moved to London, England to further his surgical studies.

Abbott's time in Iowa actually contributed little to the ornithological history of the state: he discovered no new species, no particular rarities were documented by his efforts, and his Iowa specimens remained virtually unknown to this day. The state of Iowa, however, had a tremendous impact on William Abbott: the adventures he had as a young man in Iowa, the Dakotas, and the Caribbean inspired a love of fieldwork and travel that changed his future. Having discovered the excitement and satisfaction of successfully planning, provisioning, and carrying out expeditions of scientific exploration, Dr. William Abbott, upon receiving his inheritance, chose to pursue a life in the wilderness instead of the practice of medicine.

While not directly connected to Iowa, the details of Dr. Abbott's later journeys are fascinating. He began his new life by spending 1888 and 1889 collecting birds and large game animals in the Mt. Kilimanjaro region of East Africa. These specimens were donated to the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C. when he returned, beginning an association that would continue for the rest of Dr. Abbott's life. He traveled to the Seychelles and Madagascar in 1890, 1892, and 1894, but from 1891 to 1895 focused primarily on birding the Himalayas in Kashmir, Turkistan, and Ladakh (Figure 1). Dr. Abbott explored Thailand in 1896, and for the next thirteen years cruised the coasts of Thailand and the South China Sea with his own schooner and Malay crew, visiting Sumatra, Borneo, and many smaller islands, continuously gathering bird, mammal, and anthropology specimens. He then returned to Kashmir from 1910 to 1915 (Blumgart 2003). Finally returning to the New World, he repeatedly explored deep into Hispaniola from 1916 to 1923. After retiring from the field, Dr. Abbott financed the expeditions of others through the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History. Dr. Abbott never married; he remained committed to his explorations, the results of which have been summed up thus: "No single explorer, so far as we know, has ever brought together such valuable collections and observations from such a wide range of territory. He discovered a large number of new species both of birds and mammals, not a few of



which have been named in his honor and incidentally, with the interests of a true naturalist, secured material in several other fields as well" (Anon. 1936).

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank Dr. Nate Rice, Ornithology Collections Manager at the Academy of Natural Sciences, for providing the database of Iowa birds in the Academy and answering my many questions. Thanks also to Ellen Alers, Assistant Archivist, Pamela M. Henson, Historian, and Dave Burgevin, Museum Specialist, Photographic Archives, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC for their invaluable help in providing information about and a photograph of Abbott.

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# Birding Squaw Creek Park

*Pete Wickham*

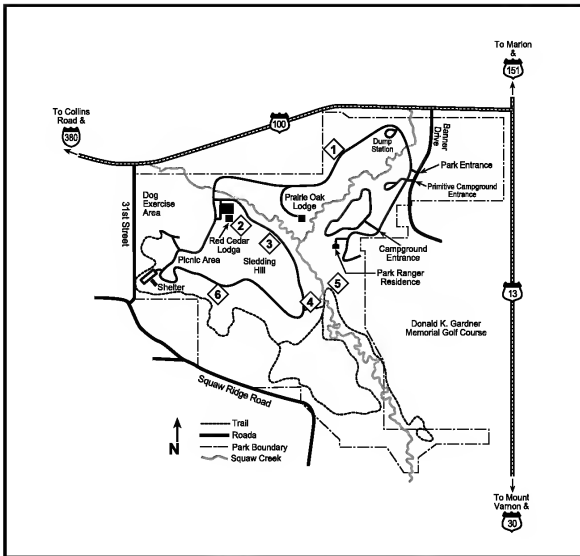
Squaw Creek Park is an outstanding area in Linn County in which to see birds. The park is located about three miles southeast of the town of Marion, and comprises about one square mile of a mixture of woods and overgrown fields. It also contains a small pond and associated marsh. Several birders from nearby Cedar Rapids and Marion have birded frequently in the park during the last twenty years, and thus, a great deal has been learned about the bird life in different seasons. At least 195 species have been found in the park, making it one of the outstanding birding areas in Iowa in all seasons but especially during migration.

The main entrance is off Iowa Hwy. 100 about 0.2 miles west of Iowa Hwy. 13, south of Marion. Follow signs to the lodges. The **long entrance road** (Figure 1.1) passes some fields (where Eastern Meadowlark and Dickcissel nest), the new Prairie Oak Lodge, and a pond with associated marsh on the right and a low area on the left where beavers have built a dam. Parking to bird in this excellent area is on your left, below the original **Red Cedar Lodge** (Figure 1.2).

After parking, one can walk a short distance back along the road to bird next to the beaver pond, now on your right, where a variety of land birds can be found in all seasons. Both Yellow Warbler and Willow Flycatcher nest in the bushes around the dam area. Then cross the road to check for birds at the pond and marsh. This area was developed only about five years ago, and has added significantly to the variety of birds seen in the park. Sora are regularly found in both spring and fall in the marshy edges of the pond. Great Blue Heron, Green Heron, and Great Egret are regular visitors during the warmer months. Occasionally Common Moorhen, Little Blue Heron, and American Bittern have been found during migration. Blue-winged Teal, Wood Duck, Mallard, and Tree Swallow nest in the immediate area. During spring and fall migration, other species of ducks such as Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Northern Shoveler, Gadwall, and Redhead regularly visit the pond.

After you have finished birding here, return to the parking lot. Drive east and south along the level road. On your right you will notice a **brushy area** (Figure 1.3). On early spring evenings, American Woodcock can be found performing both along this section and along the entrance road in open or brushy areas. Recently Bill Scheible and I counted eight in one evening. After a short distance, the road approaches a section of woods where there are several pullouts for parking. On some mornings during migration, the trees facing east in this section fill with migrant warblers and vireos. Eastern Towhee, Field Sparrow, and Gray Catbird nest in this section. White-crowned, White-throated, and Harris's Sparrows often feed along the road here in the spring. To your left, east of the road, you may notice that Squaw Creek is gurgling along through the countryside.

Near the last of these parking areas, a **path leaves the road** (Figure 1.4) and leads east through a weedy field to a crossing over Squaw Creek, which is a small stream at this point. After crossing the creek, the path leads to a **large open pasture** (Figure 1.5) in which Bobolink, Eastern Meadowlark, and Eastern Kingbird regularly nest. Back on the road and once it has passed these parking areas, it curves smoothly to the south and ascends one of the main hills in the park. Wooded areas close in on both sides of the road.



*Figure 1. Squaw Creek Park birding areas: (1) entrance road, (2) Red Cedar Lodge, (3) brushy area, (4) walking path, (5) large open pasture, (6) picnic area.*

Frequently many smaller land birds — vireos, flycatchers, and warblers — are observed along the road at this point. Blue-winged Warbler are often heard or seen here during their nesting season, and a Blue Grosbeak pair attempted to nest in the open area at the top of the hill two years ago. Eastern Bluebird regularly nest in nesting boxes on either side of the road in this section.

Upon reaching the top of the hill, the road passes a **shaded, mowed picnic area** (Figure 1.6). During spring migration in particular, the trees in these areas often fill with migrants. Mourning and Connecticut Warblers are frequently seen in bushes at the edge of the second grassy area in mid- to late May. In addition, both Swainson's and Gray-cheeked Thrushes often patrol the grassy areas at this time. Behind the easternmost picnic areas there is a narrow, unsigned trail. If you follow it downhill about 50 feet through the woods to a wider trail, you will find more land birds. (Suggestion: Take a good look at where this trail comes out, so you can find it if you come back this way.) The small brook just beyond the junction of the small trail with the wider trail feeds into Squaw Creek. By turning left, southeast onto the wider trail, one can walk through the woods to find Scarlet Tanager, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, and other nesting species. This is also an excellent area in which to see migrant warblers and vireos in the spring. The path ultimately climbs a short but steep hill and continues past a couple of overgrown fields around which one or two pairs of Blue-winged Warbler normally nest.

By retracing your steps, you can return to your car, or you can continue on the trail for a much longer distance. It loops around to the south, then to the east, and finally back north and west to meet the trail you took to the open field area. After returning to your car, and following the road either east or west, one can reach Red Cedar Lodge — the park road is a circular route — and exit the park along the entrance road. I hope this summary entices some readers to want to see Squaw Creek Park. If available, I would be happy to help first-time visitors to the park.

# Book Review: *Iowa Birds*

*James J. Dinsmore*

*Iowa Birds* by Ann Johnson, Jim Bangma, and Gregory Kennedy, Lone Pine Publishing, Auburn, WA, 2005, 176 pp., 155 color ill., 1 map, \$15.95

Prior to 2000, Iowans didn't have any book to recommend to the casual birder who wanted to be able to identify and learn more about the common bird species found in Iowa. The addition of this book now gives Iowans two such books (see review of *Birds of Iowa* by Stan Tekiela [Dinsmore 2001]).

*Iowa Birds* includes 145 species, nearly all of them species that most Iowans can reasonably expect to find yearly in Iowa. Introductory sections of the book include six pages of small paintings of each species intended to help readers identify the bird they have seen, some general information about birding in Iowa, a map and list of 50 good birding areas around the state, seasonal summaries of what species to expect at various times of the year, and a brief discussion of the topics covered in the species accounts. Species accounts comprise most of the book. A brief glossary, diagram of the main topographic features of a bird, list of selected references, checklist of all 410 species known from Iowa, separate indices to scientific and common names of birds, and brief biographies of the authors complete the book.

Each of the 145 species is given a page that includes a color painting; a paragraph of text covering various aspects of behavior, biology, identification, and fun facts; a range map color coded to show where and when it is found in Iowa; and short bullets on identification, size, status, habitat, nesting, feeding, voice, similar species, and best sites for finding the species. A lot of information is packed onto each page, and it should succeed in answering many questions of most beginning and casual birders.

As with any book of this type, the species accounts get most of the attention. I did not find any glaring errors in the text for the various species. I could quibble a bit on fine points on some of the range maps but in general they seem to be accurate and should help readers determine where and when they can expect to find various species. It is not clear who did the art work but it appears that at least two artists were involved. Some of the paintings have a very ruffled appearance (see waterfowl) while others have a much smoother appearance (see Cedar Waxwing, nuthatches). I found the latter paintings much better for identification and thought that some of the ruffled ones were poorly shaped and hard to discern (see American Redstart and Song Sparrow). For many species in which the sexes differ greatly in coloration, both sexes are illustrated. Small flight illustrations are also shown for some species including most waterfowl and shorebirds. No size scales are given with the paintings (this information is available in the text on the same page), which may cause confusion for some beginners in determining the size differences between various species (e.g., the "giant" Palm Warbler opposite a much smaller Black-and-white Warbler). In general, though, the paintings are well done and most users should be able to identify the bird they are seeing, assuming it is covered in the book.

The book covers about 35% of the birds known from Iowa including many of the more common species. It is a bit heavy on waterfowl (16 species) and light on shorebirds and warblers (7 and 8 species respectively). Undoubtedly some users will be confused when they cannot find some fairly common species in this book. In general, I believe that the authors have done a good job of selecting the species that are covered and it should meet the needs of most birders in the book's intended audience.

The book's compact size (5.5 by 8.5 inches) should fit into a field bag or jacket pocket although it is a bit too large for most pants pockets. The flexible cover seems durable and should take a lot of field wear. The book is part of a series that includes a number of other states. Although three authors are listed, clearly Ann Johnson has contributed most of the Iowa information. Ann's great knowledge of birds in general and Iowa birds in particular is evident on virtually every page. It is not specified what the other two authors, both from out of state, contributed to the book.

For each hard-core birder in Iowa, there are probably dozens of others who mainly watch birds in their yard or at their birdfeeder. This book seems to be well designed to meet the needs of those individuals and should help them identify the birds that they are seeing and learn more about those birds. Most readers of this journal will continue to use their Sibley or National Geographic field guides. However, all of us probably know several people to whom we could recommend this book. Overall, I give Iowa Birds high marks and think that it will help fill a long unmet need.

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# Iowa Ornithologists' Union Fall Business Meeting, 2005

*24 September 2005*

The IOU spring business meeting was held at Lakeside Laboratory at Okoboji. President Sharon Stilwell called the meeting to order at 1:12 P.M. In attendance were Sharon Stilwell; John Rutenbeck, vice president; Robert Cecil, secretary; Tammy Hertzell, treasurer; board members Carolyn Fischer and Jay Gilliam; and members of the organization.

**Secretary's Report.** The minutes of the fall business meeting were approved as published in *IBL* 75(2):101–103.

**Treasurer's Report.** Secretary Tammy Hertzell presented a Statement of Cash Flows for the periods ending 31 December 2004 and 22 September 2005, and a Statement of Revenues, Expenses Comparative Information for the years ended 31 December 2003, 2004, and 2005 Year-to-Date through 22 September 2005. The Statement of Cash Flows showed that the IOU had a net worth of \$64,800.73, and that thus far for the year, the organization had a net surplus of \$1,521.91. Of this amount, \$4,604.45 was in the checking account, \$7,655.18 in the saving account, \$10,326.61 remained in one Certificate of Deposit (CD), and \$42,214.49 in the Treasured CD. When the last standard CD matures, it will be deposited into the Treasured CD, which offers a higher interest rate and flexibility of access.

**Registrar's Report.** Registrar Dave Edwards was unable to attend.

**Membership Committee Report.** Karen Disbrow reported that there had been 482 memberships and of those, 60 members did not renew in 2005 despite a letter from Dave Edwards. So there currently are 422 paying memberships. Other membership development activities included Ann Johnson's appearance on Iowa Public Radio's Talk of Iowa Program to discuss her new book on Iowa birds and her appearances for book signings. Karen also reported that the IOU will have a booth at the upcoming Midwest Birding Symposium and that volunteers will be needed to operate it.

**Projects Committee Report.** Jay Gilliam reported that the committee's bylaws had been completed and that they would be presented to the Board of Directors. He also reported that the committee would soon be able to begin reviewing proposed projects.

**Publications Committee Report.** Ann Johnson observed that the IOU had excellent publications, including the journal, the newsletter, and the website. She indicated that she is updating the website, and that it will more actively promote the IOU.

**Records Committee Report.** Ann Johnson reported that the Records Committee would have a meeting on 2 October 2005, and that the committee is nearly caught up on reviewing records. She also noted that because documentations can and often are submitted electronically through the IOU website, they can be reviewed much more quickly than in the past. She encouraged those documenting their observations to immediately submit them, either electronically or by mail. Jim Dinsmore added that because of this, the data he submitted to *North American Birds* had already been reviewed by the Records Committee.

**Old Business.** There was no old business.

**New Business.** There was no new business.

**Announcements.** Karen Disbrow reminded the members of items for sale and that some of the proceeds go to the IOU. Rick Hollis discussed a project by which birding equipment is donated to birders who have lost theirs due to recent hurricanes. He is also collecting money for the same purpose. The Rivers and Bluffs Festival will be on 11–13 November 2005 at Lansing High School. Sharon Stilwell noted that she was still seeking a registrar to replace Dave Edwards. The spring meeting will be held on 19–21 May 2006 at Clear Lake and will be hosted by Mason City birders.

**Adjournment.** Pete Wickham moved and Mark Proescholdt seconded that the meeting be adjourned. The motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by Robert I. Cecil, secretary

## Iowa Ornithologists' Union Board Meeting

*24 September 2005*

The IOU board meeting was held at Lakeside Laboratory at Okoboji. President Sharon Stilwell called the meeting to order at 3:40 P.M. In attendance were Sharon Stilwell; John Rutenbeck, vice president; Robert Cecil, secretary; Tammy Hertzell, treasurer; board members Carolyn Fischer and Jay Gilliam; and members Kay Niyo, Ann Johnson, and Jerry White.

**Secretary's Report.** The minutes were approved as published in *IBL* 75(2):103–108.

**Treasurer's Report.** Tammy Hertzell reported that there had been no significant changes in the IOU's financial situation since her report at the business meeting.

**Projects Committee.** Jay Gilliam reported on the proposed bylaws that had been sent to the board. John Rutenbeck moved and Carolyn Fischer seconded that the proposed bylaws be adopted. Motion carried. Jay reported that the committee will work next on the committee's project selection procedures, a process that will take a couple of months. He suggested that they may develop a grant program with deadlines for submission of proposals. He also inquired about funding for the committee. Sharon Stilwell said that this would be discussed at the upcoming budget meeting. Jay also reported that he had received a proposal from the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation.

**Publications Committee.** Ann Johnson reported that when on-line purchases were made from Amazon.com on the IOU website, a small portion of the sale goes to the IOU. The IOU website is undergoing improvements, although there may consequently be some increase in the cost of maintaining the site. Also discussed was the possibility of scanning all back issues of IBL for access on the website. There was discussion on how current the scanned issues would be, noting that if the most recent issues were available on-line, it would be a disincentive to join the organization.

**Membership Committee.** Karen Disbrow reported that the committee still needs members and that it has not officially met yet. She also noted that she is taking over the IOU store, and is seeking volunteers for the IOU booth at the upcoming Midwest Birding Symposium.

**Old Business.** The potential liability of officers of the IOU was discussed, as well as the possible need for insurance to cover them. It was thought that the Iowa Code gives officers of nonprofit organizations such as the IOU some immunity from liability, and that further discussion with a lawyer would be desirable. This topic will be discussed at the upcoming budget meeting.

**New Business.** Jerry White gave some background on the use of low wattage personal radios (walkie talkies) used in the field by birders, and thought that if birders could agree on a single channel for their use, it would be valuable for all birders in the area. Some states have already adopted this practice. Jerry suggested that the IOU recommend that channel five be the primary channel, and that channel six be used if channel five is congested with other users. Carolyn Fischer so moved and Karen Disbrow seconded. The motion carried.

President Stilwell announced that the budget meeting would be held at her house in West Des Moines on 23 October 2005 at 10:00 A.M. She also announced that the Nominating Committee would consist of Francis Moore, Tom Johnson, and Rita Goranson, and that the Audit Committee would include Judy Garton and Mary Kuhlman.

John Rutenbeck related a new member's concern that he was unable to come to the IOU meeting because it conflicted with a hawk watch. It was noted that coordination with other birding activities around the state would be desirable, but due to their proliferation, it is difficult. It was also noted that the IOU was the first such statewide organization to have regular events, and that other events might seek to coordinate with IOU.



**Adjournment.** John Rudenbeck moved and Tammy Hertzelt seconded that the meeting be adjourned. The motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 4:40 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by Robert I. Cecil, secretary

## Iowa Ornithologists' Union Board Budget Meeting

*23 October 2005*

The IOU board meeting was held at the home of President Stilwell in West Des Moines. The meeting was called to order by President Stilwell at 10:20 A.M. In attendance were John Rutenbeck, vice president; Robert Cecil, secretary; Tammy Hertzelt, treasurer; board members Jim Fuller, Jay Gilliam, Ric Zarwell; and Karen Disbrow and Ann Johnson. Ross Silcock and Hank Zaletel arrived later in the meeting.

**Secretary's Report.** The minutes of the fall business meeting and the fall board meeting were approved as published in IBL 75:188–190.

**Treasurer's Report.** Tammy Hertzelt provided updated statements of cash flows and of revenues, expenses, and budgets. She also noted the need to inquire about the status of bonding for the secretary's position. She could not recall seeing any renewal premium notices.

**Registrar's Report.** Dave Edwards was unable to attend.

**Membership Committee.** Karen Disbrow reported on the IOU's presence at the Midwest Birding Symposium in Davenport. Each of the 336 participants was given an Iowa checklist. She noted that the IOU will be represented at the Rivers & Bluffs Fall Birding Festival at Lansing on 11–13 Nov and at Iowa City's Prairie Preview in mid-March. Being sought are additional nature-related events where a booth might be placed. Greatly appreciated was the handmade and painted wooden plaque that Pat Schlarbaum made for the IOU. Karen noted that a booth at the Iowa State Fair would be desirable, but it is very difficult to get enough people to staff it. The possibility of sharing the space with Iowa Audubon was discussed. The committee is still short two members, but Karen is actively seeking to fill the seats.

**Projects Committee.** Jay Gilliam reported that the committee will be meeting in November to discuss procedures for accepting and evaluating proposals. Members also include Doug Harr, Chris Caster, Tom Johnson, and Marlene Ehresman.

**Records Committee.** Ann Johnson reported that the Records Committee met three weeks ago and that the committee is current on evaluating records. With most reporters submitting documentations electronically, most can be evaluated in time for publication in *Iowa Bird Life* or *North American Birds*, and that some single observer records can be reviewed in as little as 24 hours.

**Publications Committee.** Ann Johnson reported on the updating of the IOU website, and then discussed the need to decide on the disposition of an estimated 1,000 lb of back issues of IBL, now stored at Sharon Stilwell's house. An upcoming discussion on the electronic archiving and accessing of all IBLs could also affect the organization's future need for them. Options include selling them or giving them away at future conferences. The committee will consider how many copies should be permanently archived. She also reported that the planned scanning of past IBLs will begin with the index issues and that Paul Hertzell is working to electronically archive issues of the IOU News.

**Travel Committee.** Kent Nickell was unable to attend

**Library/Historical Committee.** Hank Zaetel was to give his report when he arrives. When he arrived, he reported that he archives all listserv posts that deal with the organization, plus organizational minutes, handouts, and relevant newspaper articles to go to the archives at Iowa State University.

**Old Business.** Ross Silcock was to give his report when he arrived. Meanwhile, Sharon Stilwell related that from information she had received, nonprofits usually do not have officer liability insurance. She also noted that while nonprofits are protected by law, they are not protected from lawsuits. Such actions would probably fail, but there would still be legal costs. When Ross arrived, he reported that the IOU now has a general comprehensive policy, with an inexpensive rider for trips. The total cost for the policies is about \$350/yr. Regarding the need for insurance to cover directors and officers, he noted that this is usually only purchased by for-profit corporations, and that the minimum premium is about \$1,500. He also noted that organizations may try to minimize their liability with hold-harmless agreements, open meetings, etc. In summary, he thought that the IOU did not need directors and officers insurance, although practices such as full transparency in the conduct of business helped offer immunity from legal problems. Ric Zarwell recommended that the board should consider consolidating our insurance and bonding with Ross.

**New Business.** Tammy Hertzell began a discussion of the proposed 2006 budget. Because the redesigned website affected the duties of the treasurer and the registrar, Ann Johnson gave an overview of the changes and discussed the working copy of the job description for the registrar. Among other things, the registrar would maintain the database of membership records, send dues notices, send welcome letters, and send copies of IBL to new members and old copies per requests. She also proposed that members who join prior to the third issue would receive the year's back issues and continue as a member during the remainder of the year. Members who join after distribution of the third issue would receive the most recent issue and would continue as members through the following year. Ann continued to demonstrate the changes to the website, including the ability to track

renewals, to show membership levels in comparison to other years, and to more effectively follow-up on nonrenewing members. Renewing membership will be greatly simplified, similar to the process for registering for IOU meetings. Regarding the proposed policy on initiating mailing of IBLs to new members, John Ruttenbeck moved to adopt it, and Tammy Hertzell seconded. All ayes, motion carried.

Tammy resumed her discussion of the proposed budget. She estimated that membership revenues would total \$12,000. The Treasured Certificate of Deposit should yield an additional \$800, reflecting increases in interest rates and funds earning at current market rates. She noted that the amount under Transfer from General Operation Fund should be Transfer from Publications Enhancement Fund, which was necessary to cover expenses. The anticipated expenses for 2006 were \$17,850. Jay Gilliam also inquired about allocating funds to the new Projects Committee.

Tammy recommended that money in some inactive funds be transferred to active accounts, including the following: \$1,512 from the Birdathon Fund, \$390.71 from the Project Endowment Fund, and \$2,865.34 from the Book Royalties Fund to the Projects Committee. Currently, the Projects Fund has a balance of \$1,302; the action would result in the fund having a total of \$6,060.10. Also, she proposed to transfer \$4,941.39 from the Endowment Fund to the Membership Fund, which was created to offset the costs of life memberships, giving the Membership Fund a total of \$8,492.50. Tammy Hertzell moved that the noted funds be re-allocated and Jim Fuller seconded. All ayes, motion carried. John Ruttenbeck moved that the proposed budget be accepted, and Ric Zarwell seconded. All ayes, motion carried.

Ann Johnson reported that Steve Dinsmore had been nominated to fill a six-year term on the Records Committee. His appointment was so moved by Ric Zarwell and seconded by Tammy Hertzell. All ayes, motion carried.

President Stilwell reported that Doug Hunt had agreed to serve as registrar. His appointment was so moved by Bob Cecil and seconded by Ric Zarwell. All ayes, motion carried. She also noted that IBL will now be sent by a mailing house for a savings to the IOU of \$300.

After discussion, Jim Fuller moved that the IOU's complete member profile, meeting registration history, and dues history be placed on a secure site on the IOU website for limited access by selected officers such as the registrar/treasurer and the Membership Committee chair. Seconded by Jay Gilliam; all ayes, motion carried.

There was discussion about the placement of back issues of IBL online for public access, similar to the practice of other journals, and of how much time should be allowed before including the latest issues. Of specific concern was the possible impact on the payment of membership dues. Following discussion, it was moved by Ric Zarwell that the most recent two years, or eight issues, of IBL be withheld from posting. Seconded by Jay Gilliam; all ayes, motion carried. Members would have to be in good standing and have a password to get online use of the most recent two years.

Placing the membership list on the IOU website was discussed. The list would be available to members only, password protected, and on a secure site. The practice of mailing membership lists would be discontinued, although special requests for printed copies would be honored. Jay Gilliam moved and Jim Fuller seconded that the membership information be placed on the website. During discussion, the option of members to choose to not have their information made available arose. It was pointed out that up to now, a membership list has been printed and sent to members, and that with the new

electronic membership renewal process, members could opt to not include information, similar to their option under the current system. It was also noted that there had been no misuse of such information. The motion was not amended. All ayes, motion carried.

Jay Gilliam noted that the Projects Committee had received a proposal for funding. It was decided that the committee should first be given time to develop procedures for accepting and evaluating such proposals. No action was taken.

President Stilwell discussed the use of the back issues of IBL. Selling them would be desirable, but there is probably limited demand that will be further reduced by online availability. Hank Zalatel will explore donating them to libraries. President Stilwell will attempt to inventory them.

**Announcements.** There was discussion regarding the recognition of the Nehers for their graciousness in hosting birders who came to see the Green Violet-ear. It was decided that Tammy Hertzelt would get them *The Sibley's Guide to the Birds* and that President Stilwell would write them a letter of appreciation.

There were no objections to Ric Zarwell posting information about upcoming Iowa Audubon birding trips on the IOU listserv.

**Adjournment.** John Rutenbeck moved at 1:15 P.M. that the meeting be adjourned. Tammy Hertzelt seconded: all ayes, motion carried.

Respectfully submitted by Robert Cecil, secretary

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**UPCOMING MEETINGS OF THE IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION:** Spring 2006:19–21 May, Clear Lake/Ventura

**FRONT COVER:** Least Bittern, Long Pond, *Guthrie*, 11 June 2005. Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.

**BACK COVER:** Common Moorhen, on nest at Long Pond, *Guthrie*, 25 June 2005. Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.

**DESIGN:** Lynn Ekblad, Ames, IA

**GRAPHICS:** Richard Beachler, Boone, IA



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